

Journalism 205, Basic Photojournalism-Fall, 2009
Kevin Morley, Instructor
(h)330-4207
(w)649-6486 © 363-5674
pmorley@richmond.edu; kmorley@timesdispatch.com

Course Outline:

"Photography is a medium of formidable contradictions. It is both ridiculously easy and almost impossibly difficult." *Edward Steichen, A Life in Photography.*

"The reporting camera does what no other medium can do. It opens up new vistas and bares the relations of people to their environments with unequalled precision."

Arthur Rothstein, Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach.

"Shoot tons of pictures"--(anonymous)

Photojournalism combines the mechanics and art of how to take a picture with the complex mechanics of people: who they are, what they do, why they do what they do, how their actions affect others and their environments, and how their environments affect them.

The photojournalist--like a writer--tells a story. But the story is told with a picture or a group of pictures. A photo can serve as a "paragraph" that telegraphs something to the viewer. A photo can serve as a hard-hitting (or subtle) "sentence" that proves a point. A photojournalist is a journalist with a camera.

Prerequisites: Journalism 201 with a grade of C or better, an approved 35mm digital SLR camera. In some cases, students without J-201 may be approved to take the course.

Course Goals:

1. To learn the basics of shooting digital photographs.
2. To successfully shoot weekly assignments.
3. To learn how to use basic functions of PhotoShop effectively.
4. To break out of "tunnel vision" (i.e., to use the way one sees to show a fresh view of the commonplace).
5. To understand what it means to be a photojournalist.
6. Introduce multimedia formats used in photojournalism.

We will discuss photojournalism as a means of communication, the changing photographic medium (from film to digital), and the ethical bag of worms which accompanies that change.

We will view photos from the most talented visual communicators on the planet. And we will look at some inferior images, too. We will discuss legal and ethical issues related to taking pictures. We will also discuss how photojournalism can be meaningful to the reader and to ourselves.

Course Text:

Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach, by Kenneth Kobre'. 6th ed, Focal Press, 2008

Other Course reading material will be available through Blackboard/e-reserves or handouts from the following:

Photojournalism: Content and Technique by Greg Lewis. 2nd ed; Brown & Benchmark, 1995.

Doing Ethics in Journalism, Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, Society of Professional Journalists, 1993.

The Great Picture Hunt, by Dave LaBelle, Western Kentucky University, 1991.

Lessons in Death and Life, by Dave LaBelle, 1993.

Richmond Times-Dispatch

(Note: "Books cannot make a photojournalist ... out of a casual reader." *Angus McDougall, Visual Impact in Print.*)

Shooting:

This course deals with taking pictures that SAY something, that TELL A STORY. To merely aim one's camera and shoot anything--"aimlessly"--would be equal to a writer opening a dictionary, pointing at a dozen or so words, then writing them in any order as a sentence. Therefore, practice is necessary.

Nobody is an expert at first. Expertise is not expected, but you will work toward it. Effort is required in this course. Effort in thinking and seeing ... translated into your efforts in shooting and making photographs. The technical aspects of your photography will be graded as well as the aesthetic aspects and the way you execute your assignments.

Assignments:

You will have a photo assignment each week. Assignments will be due the Monday following each class. That gives you over 5 days to submit an assignment on a compact disc. Each assignment you submit must also include a self-critique of the technical and aesthetic aspects of your work. The critique should answer these questions:

Does the picture succeed? (Or, if a set of images, do the photos succeed)?

What could have been done to make it better?

Are there distracting elements in the picture?

Is the picture cropped effectively?

Is the image properly scanned with acceptable values?

Is the picture sharp?

Was there another way I could have looked at the subject or the event? ... etc.

ALL images you shot for the assignment must be submitted on a compact disc, and submitted at class time. **Please write your name on your discs as well as any other item you may submit.** (After downloading your images, you should make a copy of your work for yourself, too). After editing your images, select the image or images which you think best demonstrate the assignment at hand. This best image (or these best images) will be opened up by you with the PhotoShop program and adjusted using PhotoShop functions, then saved. (PhotoShop will be demonstrated frequently in class).

Photo Assignments/Topics***

Aug. 24-Aug. 31. (due Aug. 31): Intro/Lingo/Shooting (no grading)

Aug. 31-Sept. 7 (due Sept. 8): History/Editing/PhotoShop (no grading)

Sept. 7-Sept. 14 (due Sept. 15): "Portrait/Personality " (grading begins)

Sept. 14-Sept. 21 (due Sept. 22): "Depth of Field"

Sept. 21-Sept. 28 (due Sept. 29): "Quality of Light" and Composition

Sept. 28-Oct. 5 (due Oct. 6): "Pushing" and "Low Light"

Oct. 5-Oct. 19 (**3 best images due Oct. 19**) "Shutter Speeds/ Time-Motion"

Oct. 9-14-Fall Study Break

Oct. 19- Term project ideas due on or before this date.

Oct. 19-Oct. 26-(due Oct. 26): "Using Flash"

Oct. 26-Nov. 2 (due Nov. 2): "Feature" GUEST SPEAKER,
Dean Hoffmeyer, Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Nov. 2-Nov. 9: "Captions/Gathering Info," GUEST SPEAKER, Dan Beatty, Online content editor/photo editor, International Mission Board

Nov. 9- Nov. 16 (due Nov. 16) "Covering an Event"

Nov. 16-Nov. 23: "Ethics, the Law and Photojournalism"

Nov. 23-Class will meet...Special Topics.

Nov. 24-Nov. 29-Thanksgiving Break (break begins noon, Nov. 25)

Nov. 30- LAST CLASS ...

Dec. 4-Last day of classes.

Dec. 7-Term projects due, up until 10pm ...(Takes place of exam scheduled for Mon.,Dec.7, 7-10pm). Projects to be turned in at Weinstein 418.

***Remember, there will be readings assigned weekly. The readings are not usually long. Each reading will concern the topic/assignment at hand. **Details of all assignments can be located on Blackboard.**

Quizzes:

You will have them. Some will be announced. Some will not. They will cover material read for the week and anything gone over in class. To prepare, you must read the material, including the e-reserves, and are expected to go to suggested websites from which questions may also be asked.

Term Project:

Your term project should be challenging for you. You must turn in a typewritten project idea (or an e-mail) to me by Oct. 19. Don't wait too long to start because the project will involve quite a bit of time (if done properly). Basically, the project entails telling a story with pictures. Complete captions will also be required. A written story may accompany the project but is not required. Examples of term projects from previous classes will be shown to you. There will be more discussion on the term project requirements. As soon as you have an idea for a project, please present it to me for approval. Non-approved ideas will not be accepted.

Grades:

The photo assignments will be graded on technical quality as well as their visual success and aesthetic qualities (i.e., was the goal/message of the assignment achieved? And: did the composition/lighting/angle, etc. contribute?, etc). You will receive a number grade based on how well the images you submit communicate, on the technical merit of the images, your self-critique, and—in most cases—the caption information you supply.

Grading scale: 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; Below 60 = F.
I use + and – marks as well, including for final grades.

We will view your work in class each week.

The photo assignments will figure into 50 percent of the final grade.

The quizzes will count as 20 percent.

The final project counts as 30 percent. (There is no final exam; the project serves as the final exam).

ANY assignment (except for the term project) may be done over at any time during the semester. If you feel you can do a better job on the assignment, go for it! The higher grade will be recorded. Nobody is perfect and practice is the best tool of a photographer. Your progress will be noted.

A Paper on a Photojournalist:

Due by Nov. 3, this three-page, double-spaced typewritten paper is to be about a photojournalist of your choice. There are many photography books and magazines in Boatwright Library you can use as sources. Websites are also an option. I have some books you may borrow. Closely look at the photographer's work. What makes that person's pictures work? What is that photographer known for? Why are YOU drawn to the pictures? This paper counts as a quiz. It may be submitted via e-mail or hard copy. To help you, below is a list of noteworthy photographers. You may choose from these or you may select your own.

Ansel Adams
Annie Liebovitz
David Alan Harvey
Alfred Eisenstaedt
Robert Doisneau

Neil Leifer
Mary Ellen Mark
James Nachtwey
Henri Cartier-Bresson
Weegee (Arthur Fellig)
Galen Rowell
Lewis Hine
Robert Capa
Margaret Bourke-White
W. Eugene Smith
Eve Arnold
Randy Olson
Sebastiao Salgado

Attendance: Class will meet in **Weinstein Hall, Rm. 418**. Come to every class. Miss a class and your grade will go down one full point. If you cannot make it to a class, let me know. Acceptance of any excuse presented by you for an absence is at my discretion. If you are involved in a university-sponsored event that calls for you to miss a class, talk to me. If you miss a class, you will be responsible for the material that you missed. If four classes are missed without legitimate reasons, you will fail the course.

Things you'll need:

- 35mm digital camera (NOT a fully-automatic one; should be able to change the f-stop and shutter speeds manually).
- Flash unit (ideally, with a swivel head) This is optional, only for cameras with a 'hot shoe.'
- Sync-cord...(attaches from camera to flash unit to allow flash to be used off-camera.). If your camera does not accommodate a sync-cord, don't worry.
- Compact discs.
- Flash cards (digital film) or memory sticks, for your camera.

"Office" hours:

I don't keep office hours on campus. But, if AT ANY TIME you have a question concerning ANYTHING, feel free to call me. (Try my cell number first...363-5674) Don't hesitate to call. I don't mind. I can be reached by e-mail at pmorley@richmond.edu. I will check my e-mail daily and I will communicate through it regularly.

Plagiarism: Knowingly submitting work (photographs or commentary) that is not your own AS your own work may result in failure of the course and possible action from the Honor Council. All students have pledged to adhere to the honor code to "uphold the standards of honesty and responsibility..."

Communication:

We will be using Blackboard throughout the semester. All of your assignments will be posted there. Some examples of photos will be available through Blackboard, as well as website links, quizzes, and the syllabus. Much of my feedback on your assignments will be e-mailed to you, yet there will be commentary in class as well.